

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 220244
ORIGIN OES-09

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 /032 R

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DRAFTED BY JKBARNES:OES/OFA/OCA

APPROVED BY JKBARNES

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R 300131Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 220244

FOL RPT NICOSIA 2116 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO MADRID
LISBON THE HAGUE TOKYO AUG 18, 1978

QUOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NICOSIA 2116

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, SENV, IWC-I, CY

SUBJECT: WHALING ACTIVITIES OF FISHING VESSEL SIERRA

REF: (A) STATE 196019; (B) NICOSIA 568 (NOTAL)

1. GOC MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS HAS INFORMED DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES THAT IT IS UNABLE SUSPEND SIERRA REGISTRATION BECAUSE SIERRA'S WHALING ACTIVITIES ARE NOT ILLEGAL UNDER CYPRIOT LAW. THE MINISTER HAS ASSURED HIM HOWEVER THAT "QUIET BUT FIRM PRESSURE" IS BEING PLACED ON LOCAL DIRECTORS OF COMPANY, SIERRA LTD., WHICH REGISTERED SHIP, TO VOLUNTARILY REMOVE IT FROM REGISTRY. DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES IS URGING GOC TO JOIN IWC SO THAT LEGAL BASIS WOULD EXIST FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST SIERRA.

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2. RECORDS OF REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES SHOW THAT SIERRA IS OWNED BY LOCAL CYPRIOT COMPANY, SIERRA LTD. DIRECTORS ARE CHRYSSIS DEMETRIADES (LAWYER SPECIALIZING IN SETTING UP OFF-SHORE COMPANIES) AND EFTI PSILLAKI WHO IS ALSO SHAREHOLDER (ONE SHARE). ONLY OTHER SHAREHOLDER IS YIANNAKIS AGAPIOU WITH 99 SHARES. ALL

ARE CYPRIOT. SHIP IS REPORTEDLY MORTGAGED TO AN UNIDENTIFIED NORWEGIAN BANK FOR \$400,000. THERE IS ALSO SOME KIND OF CLAIM ON SHIP FOR "CURRENT ACCOUNT" EXPENSES BY CONTINUITY SHIPPING CORP. OF PANAMA. NO OTHER OWNERSHIP INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

3. IN CORRESPONDENCE THROUGH DEMETRIADES, SIERRA'S ACTUAL OWNERS ADMITTED TO MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS THAT THEY ARE WHALING IN ATLANTIC IN WHAT THEY CLAIM ARE UNRESTRICTED AREAS "30 DEGREES SOUTH AND 40 DEGREES NORTH". X THEY FURTHER CLAIM THEY HAVE NOT VIOLATED ANY NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL LAWS OR REGULATIONS GOVERNING WHALING. IN RESPONSE MINISTRY REQUESTED IN JULY THAT SIERRA'S OWNERS SUBMIT DETAILED INFORMATION ON THEIR ACTIVITIES (NUMBER AND TYPE OF WHALES TAKEN, AREAS WHALED, ETC.). NO REPLY HAS BEEN RECEIVED. IF ONE IS FORTHCOMING MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE PROMISED TO PASS IT ON TO EMBASSY.

4. COMMENT: DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES IS FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT MINISTRY PRESSURE ON CYPRIOT PARTICIPANTS IN SIERRA LTD. WILL RESULT IN SIERRA EVENTUALLY BEING REMOVED FROM REGISTRY. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL HOWEVER FOR DEPARTMENT TO SUGGEST THAT IWC CONTACT GOC DIRECTLY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF GOC JOINING IWC. THIS WOULD MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON GOC TO ACT AS WELL AS PROVIDE GOC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH ADDITIONAL LEVERAGE IN DEALING WITH SIERRA.
END COMMENT. STONE
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPECIES PROTECTION, WHALING, SHIP MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE220244
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: OES/OFA/OCA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780353-1239
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978087/aaaaafyp.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b3bc8264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 196019, 78 NICOSIA 568
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1757135
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WHALING ACTIVITIES OF FISHING VESSEL SIERRA
TAGS: EFIS, SENV, CY, NO, IWC-1
To: OSLO PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b3bc8264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014